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The Story of Cherry Valley



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CHERRY VALLEY, N. Y.

Read before the
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Henry U. Swinnerton*

THE STORY
OF
CHERRY VALLEY

BY
HENRY U. SWINNERTON, Ph. D.

CHERRY VALLEY, N. Y.

1908.

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THE STORY OF CHERRY VALLEY

BY HENRY U. SWINNERTON, PH. D., CHERRY VALLEY, N. Y.

Two years ago there was placed in the Presbyterian Church at Cherry Valley a mural tablet, whose inscription recalls the story which I am to relate to you in the briefest form. It reads:

A. D. 1741

Rev. Samuel Dunlop A. B.
a native of Ulster, Ireland,
led hither the families who founded

THIS CHURCH

He here preached God's peace
and taught Liberal Learning
Thirty-seven years

His Work ended in scenes of Blood
His Home desolated, He died in Exile,
near Albany.
cir. 1780.

His Wife

Elizabeth (Gallt) Dunlop,
born in Coleraine,
their daughter Mary Wells, her Husband,
and children, save one,
were cruelly slain in the
MASSACRE
which scattered the flock
Nov. 11, 1778.

A short distance from the present church is the ancient cemetery, a scant quarter acre, crowded full of Revolutionary memorials. In it stood the church of that day, a handsome structure then newly built, and about it extended the palisade fort, bastioned for cannon at opposite angles. Within the small area lie the graves of four Revolutionary colonels and upwards of a dozen others, officers

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and privates and civilian officials, who fought or served in that war; besides quite a multitude of those who suffered death or captivity, or narrowly escaped it with loss of everything at that terrible time. Around, rough slabs of rock mark the graves of the pioneers who died in the early day when there was no chisel to cut their epitaphs; among them that of John Wells, cultured gentleman and officer in the French War, and lay judge on the bench at Johnstown. Within view of the cemetery all around, are homesteads, each the center of some tale or tradition of the savage event, and by it passes the earliest thoroughfare trodden by men's feet on this frontier. The place lies on the northernmost terrace of the Catskill highland, twelve miles south of the Mohawk River, 1,400 feet above tide.

From immemorial time a wilderness route had been known to the Indians from the Mohawk at Canajoharie to the head of the Susquehanna, down which stream they passed on war or hunt, to Pennsylvania and the Chesapeake and beyond. From this primitive highway trails led northward up the Unadilla and the Chenango to the heart of the country of the Oneidas and Onondagas; and further west by the Chemung to the hunting grounds and lakes, the villages and "castles" of the Cayugas and Senecas, or Senekees. Early discovering this track, Dutch fur traders found their way to the gathering place for barter, Oghwaga, at the carry across the Great Bend, the largest village on this path. This spot, near Windsor, is important to be noted ^{and} as a center of primitive trade, of early travel, of missionary effort of war. The name survives in the hamlet of Onoquago, and Tuscarora, across the stream in the site of the village assigned by the Iroquois to a band of that adopted tribe. No white inhabitant had an abode in all this solitude. Eastward and northward a few German exiles from the Palatinate of the Rhine had begun to settle thinly in the Schoharie Valley, and a little beyond Canajoharie on the Mohawk. In a beautiful depression on this old trail, beyond the rugged ascent to the watershed, and at the spot where the red men launched their canoes in the farthest streams of the Susquehanna, a patent of 8,000 acres was, in 1738, secured by three leading men of Albany, Lendert Gansevoort, Jacob Roseboom and

Sybrant Van Schaiek, and assigned the following year to their associate, John Lindsay, a Scotchman of enterprise, who brought his family and built a habitation in 1739. After events gave the site, a beautiful knoll, a double interest, when it became the bloodiest scene of the massacre. They were narrowly saved from perishing with hunger in the bitter winter ensuing by the succor of an Indian on snowshoes with food from the river.

In New York Lindsay had enlisted the efforts of a young clergyman, traveling through the colonies, Rev. Samuel Dunlop, through whom were secured a few Presbyterian families from Londonderry, Ireland, who seeking freedom and prospects of greater promise, about 1720, had emigrated to Boston and had founded a new Londonderry in New Hampshire. Finding conditions still unfriendly even in New England, James Campbell, David Ramsay, John Dickson and John Gallt, with their families, in 1741, came to the spot, making the voyage around Cape Cod to New York and up the Hudson by sloop; slowly tacking for two weeks, it is said, on the river.

The sloops sailed under Captain Pruyn, a cousin of the owner, who anxiously awaited its arrival at the wharf, in whose family tradition has preserved the story. The provision of food had been spent, and the voyagers needed immediate aid, which was cordially afforded them. The merchants of Albany appreciated the value of the establishment of a settlement ^{at} for out on the Susquehanna trail. The ancient ledger of Hendryck Myndert Roseboom, fur dealer and importer of European merchandise, and his sons, still preserved, show the profitable trade of long years with the people of Cherry Valley, which marked his enlightened liberality in lending them aid when he learned of their exhausted condition, and in furnishing them supplies and tools for their arduous venture.

Hendryck established his son John at Schenectady to be nearer the Indians, while another son, Myndert, remained at Albany, the character of the traffic even down to the advent of the war appears from the entries in their books. For example: "Myndert Roseboom in Albany" indebted, Nov. 1774, with an invoice amounting to £210.17.2., enumerating "1361 lbs. of ^{red} leather at 2s. 9d per lb., 33 of parchment, 16 otters, 1 fisher, 14 mush rats, 13 gray skins, 9 bearskins, 5 beavers, etc." The comprising extent of the

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trade in articles of silver will appear from a few of the entries; for John called himself a "silversmith." Messrs Abm. Van Eppes & Jacob Van Epes; 5 arm bands, 3 round moons, 4 pare rist bands, 1 box, 50 pare eare rings, 13 pare large, 100 broaches, 50 do. small — 21.18.0. In Apr. 1773 Gorset Teller & Willm Groesbeek purchase ^{such} each jewelrey—"eare wheels, large crosses, half-moons, here ^a plaits, (perhaps like what the Dutch peasant girls wear)—"and 1000 gun flints," to the amount of £ 115.9.0. (*fortnote*).

The place had been called Lindsay's Bush, but Mr. Dunlap, writing to his friends, proposed to date his letter from Cherry Valley, from the wild cherry growth everywhere about. On leaving Ireland he had promised Elizabeth Gallt that he would claim her within seven years or leave her free. Having been absent nearly that time, he now returned. Storms delayed the ship off the wild coast, and he arrived just as the date was expiring, and only in time to snatch his bride from a marriage to another. It was a faithful union of long years, to be broken by a tragical end.

Some additional settlers returned with them, but for years the place remained feeble, until the Revolution, the last point of departure and supply for those setting out or returning from the wilderness. The agents of Sir William Johnson's important traffic with the natives passed to and from Oghwaga through the place; bodies of Palatine Germans took the Susquehanna route to settle its lower valley and become the fathers of the Pennsylvania Dutch; and, later, claimants from Connecticut followed, to settle Wyoming and withstand Indian massacre and the Pennamite wars with the partisans of William Penn. Lindsay soon left Cherry Valley and his farm was taken by John Wells, who became a man of influence, and in process of time his son Robert wedded Mr. Dunlop's daughter Mary. Their neighbor was James Willson, who had surveyed the patent and who had been high sheriff of Albany County. His son seems to have married a second of the daughters, named Eleanor. As early as 1748 missionaries under the influence of Jonathan Edwards at Northampton and Rev. Eleazer Wheelock, who founded a school for Indian youth at Lebanon, Conn., the school in which the able Indian leader, Joseph Brant, received a civilized education, established themselves at Oghwaga and other spots, leading

to intereourse with a class of men passing to and fro superior to the usual wayfarer of the wilds, such as John Sergeant and David Brainerd, Elihu Spencer, Samuel Kirkland and the able Gideon Hawley. Among the unmarked graves in the old cemetery must be that of a young Delaware Indian, pious, educated with Joseph Brant at Lebanon, Joseph Wooley, a preacher, teacher and apostle to his people, who died at Cherry Valley on one of his journeys to the Susquehanna. Mr. Dunlop, being a university man, gathered a few pupils very early whom he taught the classics, following the plow, or in the rude log church and school house reared near the Wells residence. It was the first beginnings of liberal education, as his church was the earliest seat of worship in English west of Albany and the Hudson. Major John Frey, and others prominent in the Revolution, were here educated. All the region southwest of Canajoharie was vaguely known as Cherry Valley, its lake, Otsego, was the Cherry Valley Lake, and the narrow Indian path was gradually subdued and widened into a rugged wagon road, the Cherry Valley road. It followed Bowman's Creek and up the steep of Teckaharawa. Long the little community remained remote and lonely, an outpost of civilization on the southwest verge of the Mohawk's country, with whom and the Oneidas; next west, the most cordial relations were maintained, and for Mr. Dunlop especially the Indians conceived high regard and veneration.

After the first twenty years the immigrants became more numerous, leading to a new issue; scattered settlements began thinly to push out west, southwest and south. At Springfield and on Otsego Lake, on the Butternut Creek and the Unadilla and Charlotte Rivers, and all along the upper Susquehanna, little clearings began to forewarn the Indians that the irresistible white man was slowly occupying his forests. Every settler was a hunter, scouring the woods for game, slaughtering the pigeon roosts and sweeping the streams of their fish. The Germans were pushing up the Mohawk; by 1750 and '60 beyond the Falls Hill (Little Falls), a strong community had been gathered about the German Flatts, and a string of forts traced a road of growing travel right through the territory of the Oneidas to the lakes. The land of the Mohawks, eastward, had been reduced to scattered patches interspersed among the hold-

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ings and great patents of the whites. The savage freely sold or gave his land, but awoke later to see that his home and his haunts were gone, and his means of subsistence were too slender to be shared with all these new comers. The intelligent young chief of the tribe, Tha-yen-da-na-gue, by his English name Joseph Brant, enjoyed the entire confidence of Sir William Johnson, co-operating in his enlightened plans and policy in the management of Indian affairs and by procuring them civilized advantages endeavoring to make up to his people what they lost by these changes. In visiting England in the interests of the claims made by the Indians, where the most flattering attentions were shown him by the court and the great officials of the government in London, it came about inevitably that he contracted ties and gained a point of view which naturally made him their ally in any changes which were later to arise.

To stay the discontent of the Indians and fix a limit beyond which the inroads of the settlers should cease, was the object of the Treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1768. Three thousand Indians gathered with their chiefs to meet Sir William Johnson, the King's Indian Superintendent, and it was covenanted that the white man should not go west of the Unadilla. That river and a line extended south to the Delaware (coinciding with the present western boundary of Delaware and Otsego Counties) should be the limit of all further advance of the despoiling settlers. This Indian line was a continental affair; of imperial extent it shut out civilization from the whole Great Lake region, including the western part of New York and the adjoining part of Pennsylvania and the entire northwest territory to the Ohio River. It passed down the Susquehanna and by the Towanda Creek to the Alleghany. The last parcel of ground on the Susquehanna was taken up at the mouth of the Unadilla in 1770 by a friend of Mr. Dunlop's, Rev. William Johnston, with a colony of his Scotch-Irish compatriots from Duanesburg, driven first from Worcester, Mass., by Congregational intolerance, to New Hampshire, and thence to Schenectady. Johnston's ordination they declared "disorderly" and burnt his church. But as that cause of Indian unrest promised settlement, grave disputes were rising among the whites themselves, the colonies against England,

disputes about stamped paper and ancient rights and taxation without representation—matters that were utterly beyond the Indians' comprehension. They had been skillfully bound by Sir William in attachment to the King; their powder and ball, their blankets and hatchets, their gratuities of food against the bitter winter starvation, all came from the good King; and they were bewildered as they now saw a deepening revolt and hatred against this beneficent friend; the militiamen or rifle ranger carving on his powder horn the rude couplet, beneath some ruder caricature of Britain's monarch,

I, powder, and my brother, ball,
Foemen are to tyrants all.

But the quarrel grew, and the Indian could not fail to be involved in it. Hope of aid from him induced the Tories to tamper with his love of blood and plunder; the King's ministers even offered bounties for the scalps of rebels, \$20.00 for a baby's scalp. Dread of him led the Colonials to cross measures; to coax him to take their side, to persuade him to stand aloof, yet to send one and another threatening expedition into his country prepared to treat with Brant, or capture him, burn his villages, destroy his crops of corn, beans and pumpkins, and cut down his apple trees. The Mohawks, after the battles of Concord and Lexington in 1775, were led to retire in a body to Canada, the exciting news of the Patriots' resistance being so made use of by Colonel Guy Johnson that the whole tribe regarded war as upon them. They left their memorial in the name of the river, but it was an exile from which they were never to return. Indians were here and there shot or captured, and not seldom scalped; Tim. Murphy boasted his record of forty Indians killed by his one hand. Finally the large military operations connected with the campaign against Burgoyne threw the savages over to the side of the King in hot anger and revenge. If a people do not take up war until passion is roused, this ingredient was now furnished. The story of St. Leger's expedition to the Mohawk Valley from Oswego, the attempt on Fort Schuyler and the bloody ambuscade at Oriskany, is too long to be introduced here; but the awful slaughter inflicted on the Indians at Oriskany, especially the Senekees, while themselves inflicting an equal carnage

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upon the Provincials, sent them howling back to their villages and vowing desperate revenge for the loss of a hundred of their braves, and particularly against Cherry Valley, for when Herkimer was felled and Colonel Cox and many other officers slain at the outset, it was Colonel Campbell and Major Clyde, both Cherry Valley men, who directed the stubborn continuance of the fight and brought off the remnant of the force, retreating but substantially victorious.

That was in 1777. Burgoyne's grand scheme failed; invasion was averted from the rich grain lands of the Mohawk, and there seemed hope for the inhabitants of the frontier, where the Oneidas, at least, under the guidance of their missionary adviser, Mr. Kirkland, seemed not disposed to be unfriendly to the patriotic cause.

But the British in New Jersey had found Washington hard to handle, and in hope of weakening him Brant, the Butlers and other Royalist leaders on the border were directed to spread such alarm and create such distress and devastation as to draw away detachments for its relief. A regiment under Colonel Iekabod Alden, the Sixth Massachusetts, made up in part of friends of the Cherry Valley people, but most inefficiently commanded, was at Albany, and in May started on its way to garrison the frontier posts. Schoharie was barely saved by the arrival of help in July; at Cobleskill, earlier, occurred a fight and defeat by Brant, in which Captain Patrick was killed, and German Flatts so late as September 17th was burnt, and yet before any aid reached it; so tardy was the action of Alden, as well as of the local military. The main body of the regiment, 230 strong, with the lieutenant colonel, destined for Cherry Valley, only arrived July 24th, the colonel himself only on the 30th. Springfield had been burnt June 18th, and a swarm of fleeing refugees from every quarter had brought the news of the shocking slaughter, on July 3rd, at Wyoming, and well-founded rumors of what was being planned against their own settlement. On remote farms the rapid-moving chief appeared, requiring every man to declare for the King or flee with wife and little ones. The hope of Brant would seem to have been, while guiding his tribes in a war in aid of the royal cause, to keep their savage impulses in check. Thus he burnt Springfield, but first gathered the women and chil-

dren into a house to be saved. He burnt German Flatts, but the people had already taken refuge in the forts on the river. Against Cherry Valley in particular he must have been reluctant to move, for the people were his personal friends. John Wells had been the respected associate of Sir William Johnson in public affairs at Johnstown, both, it is true, now dead, but the families still intimate. In the French war Wells had built a fort at Oguwaga for the Indians, and he and Colonel Campbell had served as officers under Johnson at Fort Edward. Mr. Dunlop had been in happier times an adviser and sharer with Brant in the missionary and civilizing projects which he had promoted. Colonel Clyde and his apprentice with Mr. Kirkland, about the year 1770, had erected a church for the Oneidas at their castle, an enterprise such as Brant assisted with warm approval and by raising money. Brant was a frequent visitor and old acquaintance of Mrs. Clyde's, who as Catherine Wasson, at Schenectady, had been the friend and playmate of the beautiful Lady of Johnson Hall, his sister, Mollie Brant. Even a man like Colonel John Butler, who commanded at Wyoming, said afterwards that he would have gone on his hands and knees to save the Wells family.

But society was cloven asunder, and in the unscrupulous Walter Butler, his son, and his crew of Tories, Brant was fated to co-operate with men that put all humane considerations at defiance. The spirit of the Indians was hard to control; his own Mohawks felt that their lands were gone forever; and the Tories, a bad lot generally, included every low renegade and every unmitigated brute on the border. The strife degenerated to utter butchery, and Brant must bear the odium. An incentive to rapine with such men, not often noticed, was the prospect of ransom for captives, women and children, and the sale of such slaves as could be raided away. Mention is made in the list of captives of "Mr. Dunlop's negro wench" and other slaves, who were carried off, even when white captives were set free; and of these latter the families of men of importance were likely to be retained as prisoners in order to keep their husbands and fathers busy and anxious for their recovery, and so cripple their activity in the war.

It was a summer of terror. The large buildings of Colonel

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Campbell had been stockaded early in the year. General Lafayette at Johnstown advised the erection of a large fortification round the grave yard and commodious church. Early in June the people moved in here, with the fugitives from Springfield and nearby places, together with those from Unadilla under Rev. Mr. Johnston, who was made chaplain of the garrison, while his sons enlisted or scouted. All along urgent appeals and efforts had been made to secure defenders, with little success. Of 600 militia summoned at Canajoharie only 200 responded. At Cherry Valley there were only 80 armed men in July, owing to the demands of the harvest and for the soldiers elsewhere. June 5 Clyde reports to General Stark, "from 6-700 cattle feeding within a circle of $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile, and not over 30 men that would stand their ground if attacked." He pleads for assistance to save these large supplies from being "lost to freedom." Yet Brant, spying from the over looking Lady Hill, refrained from an attempt to surprise it with a small force he had, by mistaking a train of children playing soldier with sticks on the green before Colonel Campbell's house, for a body of troops. It was in seeking to waylay a messenger who might explain this mysterious force that his own valued friend, Lieutenant Wormuth, or Wormwood, of Palatine, on his return from announcing the actual approach of a few militiamen under Colonel Ford, was shot at "Wormwood rock" in the ravine of Teekaharawa. The rock is still pointed out, called Brant's Rock, from behind which the Indian who was with him rashly and against his orders shot down his boyhood neighbor as he rode by on his horse, his orderly making his escape to carry the news of the tragedy to the friends of both men; for Brant's ancestral home was at Canajoharie.

Cherry Valley in the forty years since its settlement had grown to be a place of some sixty families, including some exceptionally intelligent and prominent persons. Judge John Wells had died, but Mr. Dunlop was still living, and the Wells homestead was occupied by the large family of Robert Wells. Captain Robert McKean, an intrepid Indian fighter, was active with a body of rangers scouting everywhere, gathering information and watching the movements of the foe. The important family of the Harpers had

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lately moved to the Charlotte Valley, but operated their mill at the Beaver Dam to furnish lumber for completing the redouts. Colonel Campbell we have seen at the Battle of Oriskany; and among those most to be relied upon was Samuel Clyde, a veteran of the earlier wars; bred a ship carpenter, he had built naval docks at Halifax and batteaux for the expedition to Ticonderoga, and had fought at Frontenac. At Schenectady he had married his brave wife, a woman of superior mind, a niece of Matthew Thornton, the patriot leader of New Hampshire and signer of the Declaration of Independence.

The emphatic choice of the Patriot cause by the people of Cherry Valley had been publicly declared as early as 1775. A liberty meeting was held in the church to express sympathy with the people of Boston, and to ratify the acts of the Continental Congress. They denounced the attempts of the Tories at Johnstown through the Grand Jury to commit Tryon County to the Royalist cause. The strong Whig sentiments of the place, against the plans of the Johnsons and Colonel Butler's Highlanders, were voiced in fiery speeches from Thomas Spencer, an Indian interpreter of rude eloquence, and from Mr. John Moore, a man of ability and education, Delegate from Tryon County in the Provincial Congress, but incapacitated for war service by a lameness. He with Campbell and Clyde were on the Committee of Safety for Palatine district, and two others, James Willson and Hugh Mitchell, served later on the Schenectady Committee. A letter from these earnest men to the Committee at Albany, imploring help to save the frontier, concludes as follows: "In a word, gentlemen, it is our fixed resolution to support and carry into execution everything recommended by the Continental Congress, and to be free or die." Yet their sobriety and firm religious principle are attested as well by a letter to the Palatine Committee objecting to a meeting needlessly called on a Sunday: "For unless the necessity of the committee sitting super-exceed the duties to be performed in attending the public worship of God, we think it ought to be put off till another day."

Sir William Johnson had died in 1774. The truculent Toryism of Guy Johnson, his successor, aroused deep hostility, which led him either to feel or feign fear for his own safety. He declared

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that he was in danger of capture by the "Bostonians," and with the body of Mohawks retired, first to Fort Stanwix, and finally to Montreal. He here co-operated with Sir Guy Carlton in fomenting the hatred of the Cayugas and Senecas. From Canada round by the lakes and forests, and up the Susquehanna to Oghwaga and Unadilla, where Brant had his rendezvous in the rear of Cherry Valley, trickled mingling rivulets, red coats, green-clad riflemen and Canadian half-breeds, Tories and malcontents, and gathering bands of stealthy Indians, driving out all who would not declare for King George, and concentrating a force of 1,500 to 2,000 men. Along the flats of the streams, under British incitement, wide fields of corn and vegetables were planted for feeding them.

Yet the summer passed away and no attempt had been made on Cherry Valley. Colonel Alden, an eastern man unused to Indian ways, could not realize the danger, notwithstanding the scenes going on around him, and the serious advice of citizens of experience. "The depredations were from small bands; he would send out and arrest them." His theory was that savages would never stand against disciplined soldiers; besides, they had artillery, two swivel guns. The families in the fort were not allowed to remain; instead, he quartered his officers in their houses, himself with his lieutenant colonel fixing his headquarters at that of Robert Wells, a quarter of a mile from the fort. There is marrying and giving in marriage, nevertheless, as well as eating and much drinking, in the midst of warlike alarms. Lieutenant McKendry in his Journal records, September 9, Captain McKean returned from a scout to Unadilla with two prisoners, and October 22 is present at the captain's marriage to Mrs. Jenny Campbell. The day following he is at the wedding of Sergeant Elijah Dickerman and Letty Gibbons. "Drank 7 Galls. wine." Lieutenant Colonel Stacy and Captain Ballard have a horse race and Stacy wins the bet. Viewing some horses at John Campbell's he "drinks cyder," and "milk punch" at Mr. Ramsie's with Captain Parker; milk punch also at Alden's headquarters "when Fort Allen is named by Capt. Hickling." Alden He goes "to Harmony Hall and drank some Grog," and goes to Harmony Hall again some days later, what for not said, but presumably same refreshment. October 15 he "wet his appointment,"

"wine 28 dollars," and Lieutenant William White wets his, "Wine Amt. 36 dollars." Surely our liberties were achieved not without mighty wrestling with the liquor interest. But they were all in it. The very first day of his arrival he records apparently a visit of courtesy upon a family friend of other days. "Went to Rev'd Mr. Dunlop's & drank sillabub while discoursing the old Gentleman about sundries affairs."

Brant meanwhile ceases his activities not a moment. His design may perhaps have been by repeated alarms and threats to frighten his friends in the place into taking flight, and then to attack the stockade, a measure of legitimate war. But two things conspired to defeat such a design, if he entertained it; in the first place many of the people did flee, as did Mr. Dunlop, removing to Albany the best of his goods. But September and October passed, and winter beginning with November in that elevated climate, they came back, partly to care for their stock, partly thinking the danger was passed from the lateness of the season. So that when the blow came it was far more calamitous than the Indian leader expected it to be. In the second place, his own situation was affected by a blow dealt him from Schoharie under orders from the energetic Governor Clinton. There was a patriot Colonel Butler there, William, who with great speed crossed his regiment from the Schoharie through the forest to the Delaware, and thence down the Owleout to the Susquehanna, and on a rapid sweep uprooted both Unadilla and Oghwaga; a stroke which had it been accomplished earlier might have saved the whole frontier. Brant gave up the contest for the season and was on his way to Niagara to winter, but at Tioga Point he met Walter Butler with his motley force wild with the project of an attack on Cherry Valley. Brant was reluctant to return, reluctant to serve under Butler, whom he despised. Perhaps he hoped by being present to guide counsels and mitigate some features of the stroke, from which everything was to be feared. At all events he consented to join the enterprise. There was a disused trail, midway, neglected by the scouts sent out south and west; by this they stole around the hills, delayed by bad weather, yet undiscovered, till they reached the rear of the settlement after daylight on the 11th of November. A notification from Colonel

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Gansevoort at Fort Schuyler had told of the meeting of Butler and Brant at Tioga and of their starting for Cherry Valley. But the pickets were merely dispatched along the usual roads, the feeble scouts were captured, the onset had all the advantage of a surprise, and the incredulous Alden at the Wells house was caught before he could reach the fort. They numbered about 800 men, of whom 30 were British troops under four officers, 600 Indians, principally Senecas under the bitterly cruel Hiokatoo (whose wife was widely known as Mary Jamieson), and 150 Tories, many in Indian paint and of worse than Indian atrocity.

The wakeful Mrs. Clyde had dreamed of Indian alarms and of warnings from Mollie Brant, and at daylight urged her husband to repair to the fort and learn if all were right. He had not time to return when a wounded rider came in with the word that the foe had overtaken and shot him. The signal gun was fired, a dismal rainy morning. Mrs. Clyde being prepared, gathered her family and fled to the ravine as the savages emerged from the forest behind. There were eight children besides an apprentice and a little dog. The babe never wailed, the dog did not bark. The rain turned to sleet and snow, yet all escaped after a night's exposure and terror, a relief party coming out from the fort and all running the gauntlet of the enemy's fire in crossing the open ground in front of the palisade. A battle raged here for hours, renewed on the 12th, but the cannon compelled the foe to retire. Colonel Clyde was luckily within, and he seems to have assumed the command, or it might have been taken, as nearly all its officers were surprised at their quarters in the house of the settlement.

The Wells house had been the first to be attacked. They were at worship when the rifle of a Tory felled the head of the household. The whole family were slain, Robert Wells, his wife and four children, his mother, brother and sister and three domestics, together with the guard of Colonel Alden. Having secured the Lieutenant Colonel, Stacy, Brant demanded, "Who runs there?" and being told, "The colonel," he turned over his prisoner and pursued the fugitive, calling on him to surrender. Alden turned to use his pistol, but the tomahawk flew and he fell in the roadway. The body, dragged to one side, was found on a spot still pointed out just

below the ascent to the Wells house. This is the account given in a MS. by Judge George C. Clyde, and the account also related to me personally by Mr. George Ripley, both of them grandsons of Colonel Clyde; namely that Colonel Alden was killed by Brant himself, but, as he alleged, in self-defence. A pillar of concrete with marble tablet erected on this spot marks the occurrence.

Every foot of the Cherry Valley soil has its tale of the experiences of that day. Hugh Mitchell avoided the Indians, but gained his house to find his wife and four children left for dead, two being carried captives. One child showed signs of life, and as he was in the act of restoring her the blow of a Tory extinguished the spark; all that was left was to load the corpses on a sled, and over the fresh fallen snow, bring and lay them with the ghastly rows with which the great trench was being filled. He recognized his near neighbour, a Royalist renegade named Newbury, as the man who committed this brutal act, and he had the satisfaction, later, of bringing him to the gallows for his crime. Mitchell lies buried at Cherry Valley at the age of 102 years.

Mrs. Elizabeth Dickson escaped with her children to the hill behind the house, but her infant fretting she ventured back for milk and did not return. The daughter, Eleanor, peering about, at length saw a scalpstick on which, drying, among others waved a tress of brilliant auburn of a color such as there was none other in the settlement but her mother's. The Campbell home was defended so valiantly by the aged Captain Cannon, the grandfather, a naval veteran, that the Indians let him go; but his wife was captured, and, too feeble to make the journey, was struck down in the snow by an Indian the next day, and her body was buried at the fort. It may have been this piece of barbarity which led Brant to insist on the release of the majority of the women and children. Forty-five of these were now permitted to return. The thirty-four carried off, as reported in a return by Colonel Harper shortly after, included all males captured and the families of prominent persons, and likewise some eight or ten negroes. Thirty-three inhabitants were massacred and fourteen of the regiment, besides the colonel. Colonel Campbell was absent at the time; his wife was captured with her infant and other children, except one, William, rescued and carried to the

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river by a faithful slave. He was afterwards Surveyor General of the State. Mrs. Campbell's experience was most harrowing. The murdered Mrs. Cannon was her mother. With the little babe in her arms she made the bitter journey all the way down the Susquehanna to Tioga Point, and up the Chemung to the Seneca Castle. Here she passed the winter, not ill-treated by the Indians, but destitute of sufficient clothing and in deepest anxiety about her children's fate as well as of her friends. One day a squaw asked her why she wore the linen cap, then the mark of a lady, saying she had such a cap, and produced it. Mrs. Campbell recognized it as the one worn by her loved friend, Jane Wells! Towards spring the British officers at Fort Niagara, hearing that there was a lady who was a prisoner at the Castle, sent a messenger on horseback with a supply of female raiment and provisions for her relief. As soon as the season permitted she was carried to Fort Niagara and by the officers ransomed from the Indians, she returning the kindness by services with her needle, until she was sent to Montreal. After nearly two years of captivity she was exchanged for a Mrs. Butler and her children. In the cartel boat on Lake Champlain she was accompanied by several young ladies who had been at school at Montreal and were detained by the hostilities till this opportunity of a return, and after being fired upon and landed in the wilds of Vermont, owing to a false alarm, they all reached their friends in Albany. Two of the Campbell boys were lost among the Indians and adopted by them. Matthew returned adorned with ornaments of silver and diamonds, doubtless rifled from the body of some slain officer. The Indians had adopted him as a chief, and treated him with honor. The other son, James, six years old, was lost for some three years, forgetting his small knowledge of the English speech. Shortly after his restoration occurred the tour of General Washington over this frontier, who being entertained at Colonel Campbell's house, held this interesting child upon his knee. He lived to be ninety-eight, when the present writer attended his funeral in 1870. After the Civil war he was taken to Albany and shook the hand of General Grant. He was the father of the author of the *Annals of Tryon County*, and grandfather of Douglas Campbell who wrote "The Puritan in Holland, England and America."

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The Massachusetts troops passed the winter in the fort, and in June following joined the expedition under General Sullivan at Otsego Lake. The fort was dismantled and the church eventually burnt, as were practically all the buildings of the place. Four years later, on the 18th of April, 1781, a second descent was made on the few venturesome people who had returned to Cherry Valley, by a band of eighty men, who killed eight persons and took fourteen prisoners. Till that year Captain McKean had been as ever active, but that summer Colonel Willett with 150 Americans fought a battle with from 200 to 300 Indians at Durlagh (Torlock), some miles east of Cherry Valley, winning a fine victory, but the brave captain was carried off by his men wounded to his death.

When Mr. Dunlop returned from Albany that Autumn to see to his affairs for the winter, together with his wife and daughter (unmarried) he was accompanied by his married daughter, Mrs. Eleanor Willson, and by a young man to whom Elizabeth expected to be married. This young man was killed. Elizabeth passed the later years of her life at Bernardsville, N. J., in the home of her niece, Mrs. Dr. Boyland, and as "Aunt Whitie" was well remembered by her great niece, who died at over ninety, a year ago, the mother of Bishop Fitzgerald of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The effects saved from Cherry Valley were burnt in a fire at Barnardsville, and Mrs. Fitzgerald related that the daughter of Mr. Dunlop used to say that her greatest regret in this fire was not the household articles so much as the loss of the family coat of arms, the mark of their respectable standing. The arms of the Dunlops forms an adornment of the tablet set up in the Cherry Valley Church.

Mrs. Dunlop at the moment of the alarm happened to have in her arms the child of the negro slave woman. When they said the barn was on fire she stepped to the door to look and was shot by a bullet from an unseen hand. In the rush that followed some unfeeling brute severed the arm that held the child and flung it into an apple tree that stood long after nearby. Violence to Mr. Dunlop was averted for a moment by the astonishment of the Indian who would have scalped him at seeing come off in his hand the wig which he wore as a gentlemen of position; when a chief

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named Little Aaron interposed to save the venerable pastor, shocked and prostrated already almost to his death by the awful scenes that were to end his peaceful labors. He and his unmarried daughter were prisoners, but were soon released and made their way with the wretched train of some 200 others that were reported by Colonel Clyde as rendered destitute by the calamity. He soon died, probably at Schenectady, but where his ashes repose is not known.

His little grandson, John Wells, was the only member of that family who survived that day. Mrs. Willson just before the massacre besought her sister, Mary Wells, to allow her to take this child with her back to Schenectady, where he had shown great aptitude in a few weeks' schooling he had enjoyed that summer, and she left Cherry Valley with some officers a day or so before the attack. He lived to graduate at Princeton and to become the most eminent lawyer in New York City. As a young man he co-operated with Alexander Hamilton in the publication of the "Federalist" newspaper, and some of the pieces in it attributed to the older hands were said to be from his pen. At his untimely death from yellow fever, in 1832, a bust of his beautiful head was placed in old Grace Church, with this inscription: "Erected by the Bar of New York as a tribute of their respect for the memory of John Wells, who adorned their profession by his integrity, eloquence and learning."

This monument is now one of the most beautiful adornments of St. Paul's Chapel in Broadway.

One of the most vividly lifelike accounts of the experiences and privations of those who escaped the hands of the Indians at the time of the massacre, as well as a most interesting sketch of the difficulties and hardships of the immigrants in the period of poverty previous to the war, is given from the life of one who survived them, in "Jane Ferguson's Narrative," who in extreme age, but in a most intelligent manner, dictated the tale of her people's settlement a few miles west of Cherry Valley, now Springfield, a number of years before the war of the Revolution, of their retreat to the neighborhood of Schenectady, their starving life through the years of strife, and the bitter struggles of the return. It is too

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long to be quoted here and would lose its interest in an abridgement. It was published in the American Historical Magazine of the D. A. R. *Monthly*

Immediately upon the close of the war the Cherry Valley people returned to rebuild their homes. The ancient trustee's book of the Church bears on its first page, in a hand writing like a piece of fine engraving, the quaint record of a gathering at the ruins of their sanctuary among the graves of their kindred and hard by the trench where the victims of the fatal day were buried. "We the ancient inhabitants of Cherry Valley, having returned from exile, finding ourselves destitute of our church officers, to wit, elders and deacons:—our legislature having enacted a law for the relief of those, etc."—they proceeded to appoint a day for the rehabilitation of their Zion. The rude and simple edifice was built, but it was not till 1796, eighteen years after the cessation of Mr. Dunlop's labors, that a pastor could be secured in a young man of talent, who with the pulpit assumed charge of the Academy, then just chartered under the newly founded Regents of the University. A marble tablet was erected in the church, in 1904, the gift of a grandson of this young divine and teacher, the Right Reverend Henry C. Potter, Bishop of New York. It reads as follows:

Not
The Reverend Eliphalet Mott, D. D. LL. D.
Clarum Et Venerabile Nomen,
for sixty-one years President of Union College,
was from 1796 till 1798
Minister of this Church and in the Academy here
began his career as
EDUCATOR.

There is also in the church a memorial brass to Judge William W. Campbell, referred to above as the author of a very early book upon the history of this frontier, to which every writer on the subject must ever be indebted. "The Annals of Tryon County, or the Border Warfare of New York." He is commemorated as "Vir bonus, Judex justus, Institutionum Amicus."

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The writer acknowledges the help derived at many points from "The Old New York Frontier" by Francis W. Halsey, the best treatment of the general subject yet written.

NOTES.

See Page 5.

Mr. Roseboom held the responsible position of Cruyt Magassijn Meester, or "Powder Master," at Albany continuously from 1771 to 1786, embracing the entire period of the war. His "Powder Book" records "June 10, 1777, 100 barrels, loaded by order of Mr. Philip van Renselaer, 25 wagons each, 4 bar'l" This ammunition was used in the campaign against Burgoyne. The "Receipt Book" of his son, Col. Myndert Roseboom, as one of the "Commissioners, Middle District, Albany," is full of receipts of moneys for food and supplies gathered for "the poor, distressed people" and the "Refugees;" extending from Sept. 16, 1777 to April 2, 1778, the time when the pinch of war was sternly felt in the upper Hudson and Mohawk Valleys.

See Page 9.

The famous "Tim" Murphy boasted his record of forty (40) Indians killed by his own hand. The following story of him survives at Cherry Valley. On a geological shelf or terrace in the hills west of the village, there was a high level trail, by following which the savages could pass around unseen, meandering with the hills, but keeping above the houses. An Indian passing by on this track and seeing Murphy within hail conferring with Clyde and Wells, was tempted to call out an insulting challenge and passed on. The marksman knew that he would return, lay for him concealed, and shot him as he reached the spot where he had uttered the insult.

See Page 11.

Halsey. The reason assigned by Col. Johnson for the building of this fort was that "the fort at Cherry Valley was too far distant;" implying the existence of such a stronghold there at the time of the French War. It would naturally be a stockade enclosing the house and premises of Wells himself on the hill, and doubtless included the shelter of the log church which tradition locates on that hill near the Wells house. There is no local recollection of such a fort, but at the very first there must have been a protection against surprise and treachery such as a fortified house. The good terms on which the people at Cherry Valley lived with the Indians caused all trace of both these forts to disappear very soon. A body of 800 men was raised at Canajoharie in the French War and 100 of them were sent to Cherry Valley.

The need of a fort at Oghwaga for the Indians was the direct result of Braddock's defeat, which threatened to carry the Indians of Pennsylvania and the Western New York tribes over to the French, since they seemed to be more powerful than the English. Pontiac's war, in 1763-4, and the resulting disturbance and famine, broke up the Mission at Oghwaga, the school being removed to the foot of Otsego Lake, where it would be within easy reach at Cherry Valley.



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